

FIGHTERS FOR THE FREEDOM OF ISRAEL
=====

SUMMARY OF SPEECHES DELIVERED AT MASS MEETING
OF FIGHTERS FOR THE FREEDOM OF ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, 10th of Ab, 5728
(August 15th, 1948)

Geulah Cohen spoke of her special ties with Jerusalem. It was in Jerusalem that she had been sentenced to imprisonment; Jerusalem which beckoned to her from afar when she escaped from the women's prison at Bethlehem; and in Jerusalem that she slipped out of the clutches of the British. She escaped in the guise of a veiled Moslem woman because this garb had always tickled the romantic palate of the British.

The under-privileged Jewish quarters of Jerusalem gave her shelter. Today, she had strolled through the same streets and into the same Government Hospital from which she fled, and there were no longer any Britons. But only a few hundred yards away, the walled Old City blackened the horizon, and there the British still ruled with the aid of the Arabs. Complete liberation would come only after the Old City and the Temple Area were freed. The Temple was always the diadem of the kingdom of Israel. There was no Temple without a kingdom and no Kingdom without a Temple.

The speaker recalled the many generations which had fought with fanatical devotion for the Temple Area. The Temple was a symbol of liberty and was destined still to be the symbol of freedom. She concluded by reading a poem by the bard of Jewish freedom, the seer of the battle for freedom, the Hebrew "Walt Whitman" - Uri Zvi Greenberg.

Dr. Israel Scheib in his speech contended that the Government of Israel were unable to carry out their act of treachery in Jerusalem. Jerusalem had overcome them against their will. There was apparently some magnet in Jerusalem, and today everyone demanded Jerusalem as the capital. Today too, the return of the central institutions to Jerusalem was being discussed. But before even one such institution was restored to the city, it was essential to bring here one important body - the General Staff of the Army of Israel.

There was a fresher atmosphere in Jerusalem. Its perspectives were much better. A triumphant battle assuring peace could only be waged from this city. Let the demand come from this meeting: the General Staff of the Army of Israel must be transferred to Jerusalem. But as the Government of Israel had not yet comprehended the significance of the step and was lagging in such comprehension, the fear continued to be rife that the Government was still capable of retreat and still liable to agree to leaving Jerusalem outside the boundaries of the State.

Dr. Scheib therefore announced that the Headquarters of the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel was being transferred to Jerusalem. It was well that the United Nations Observers should know this, as should all those who hoped to arrest the tides of history against the will and the interest of the Jewish people. Let Abdullah know this, too, he who had hoped to be

- 2 -

king at least in the walled old city. The Fighters for the Freedom of Israel hereby inform him: you shall not be king, neither you nor any other British agent, nor the son of any other nation. "No stranger shall sit upon his seat"... and the Seat of David was in the old city. The Temple was not a question of mysticism; the Temple was the nerve-centre, and the nerve-centre the link between body and spirit.

The Ninth of Ab was the historic occasion on which the Army of Israel should and could have captured the Old City. It was on this day that the First and Second Temples and Bethar were destroyed. A day of mourning should have become a day of liberation. There were no military reasons for putting off that liberation. The reasons were political and were inadequate. The Arabs had broken the truce in the most revolting manner at Latrun. Instead of giving them the proper reply, the Government had besought the United Nations to fix a date; but the United Nations would prescribe the date in accordance with the interest of those who ruled that organisation -- the Anglo-Saxon powers. They did not want to see a large and strong Jewish State come into being. The Soviet Envoy had come to Eretz Israel direct from Moscow; but the American Envoy -- even though he was an honest man who liked Jews and supported Zionism -- found it proper to travel to Eretz Israel via London and the Vatican. What had James MacDonald done there? American policy apparently had to take into consideration the views of the British and the Pope, and these, as was known, were not among the more enthusiastic supporters of the redemption of the people of Israel. They wanted to exploit the sanctity of the Holy City for political motives. But if the Holy City were indeed Holy, it was primarily for the Jews: because the roots of the sanctity which Christianity revered were in our own sacred tenets.

The Jewish steel would not halt before the walls. The city would be liberated entirely and the Temple would be built. But there would be no more sacrifices in this Temple. The vast sea of our blood which had been spilled in the Diaspora was a sufficient atonement. Nor would the tithe of the pauper be brought to Jerusalem any longer. There would be no poor in the Jewish land because its regime would be one of justice and equality.

The speaker ended by appealing to architects to sit down before their draughtsman-boards and prepare the plans for the Temple. This was the last Fast which Israel would observe. Next year the foundation stone would be laid for our edifice of the Temple.

=====

This meeting was attended by many thousands of people, and was broadcast throughout the country.